

Hamilton Grange

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Memorial
New York



Immigrant • Constitutional Lawyer • Orphan • Military Officer • Publisher • West Point • Politician • Passionate Capitalist • Anti-Slavery • Political Philosopher • Author • Challenge Bank of New York • Secretary of the Treasury • Federalist Papers • Aide-de-Camp • King's

Alexander Hamilton's Summer Home

In the late 1700s, well-to-do city dwellers moved to Harlem Heights in summer, seeking its cool breezes.

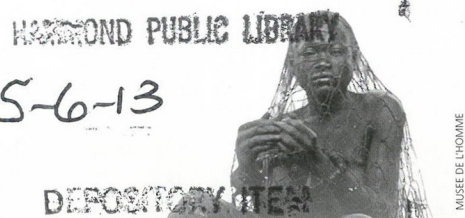


NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY / GEORGE HAYWARD

They also wanted to avoid yellow fever, a summer threat in lower Manhattan. Hamilton and his wife Elizabeth (of the influential Schulyer family) often visited friends here, and decided to build their own retreat.

In 1802, they moved in and Hamilton began commuting to his downtown law office, a 90-minute carriage trip. He and Elizabeth also began entertaining friends, colleagues, and leaders in their elegant home and gardens.

Little did Hamilton know that his time at The Grange would be brief.



MUSEE DE L'HOMME

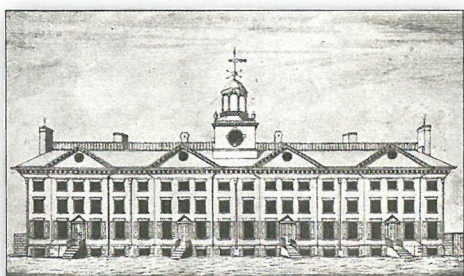
Witness to Slavery

Alexander Hamilton (1755?-1804) grew up on Nevis and St. Croix, islands in the Caribbean, where thousands of enslaved African Americans labored in sugar cane fields. As a clerk for a shipping company, young Hamilton worked directly with ship captains bringing in their human cargo. This experience haunted him and led to his lifelong opposition to slavery.

Saved by a Hurricane

Hamilton's mother Rachel raised him and his brother alone. A shop owner, she died of yellow fever when Hamilton was in his early teens. That's when he started working at the shipping company. He impressed his boss with his energy, ambition, and intelligence. Then the local newspaper published his letter describing a devastating hurricane. Townspeople were so taken by his writing that they helped pay his way to America to further his education. In the letter, he wrote: *... the ear-piercing shrieks of the distressed were sufficient to strike astonishment into Angels.*

In America



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES / BUTLER LIBRARY

Hamilton plunged into American life. He enrolled in King's College (now Columbia University) in New York. He wrote passionately about the revolutionary ideas of America's rebels. When the fighting began, young Hamilton joined them. By the time he married at 25, he was a published writer, seasoned military leader, and close friend of George Washington.

Family Man

Hamilton and Elizabeth loved children. They had eight of their own and took in others. Hamilton's work as a lawyer helped pay bills while he served the country with little, if any, pay. His public career is described on the other side of this brochure.



THE GRANGER COLLECTION / NEW YORK

The Duel

After years of differences, Aaron Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel in 1804. Burr, now the country's vice president, felt he had to defend his honor. Friends tried to soothe both men, but failed.

Facing possible death, Hamilton wrote letters to his friends and family. After he died from Burr's bullet, Elizabeth read his letter and these final words: *Adieu, best of wives and best of women. Embrace all my darling children for me.*



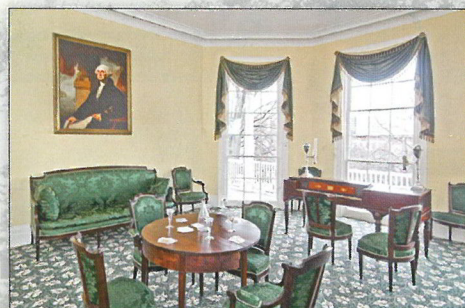
JP MORGAN CHASE ARCHIVES

Elizabeth Carries On

Family friends made sure Elizabeth had enough money to live with her children at The Grange. She preserved Hamilton's thousands of letters, essays, and other writing. She also helped start an orphanage and was its director into her 80s. At age 91, she went to live with a daughter in Washington, DC. She charmed presidents and other dignitaries until she died in 1854, at age 97.



THE GRANGER COLLECTION / NEW YORK / BRADY EARL



George Washington oversees the parlor.



The Hamiltons hosted many dinner parties.



Hamilton's portrait and bust greet visitors.

GRANGE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR PHOTOS: NPS / KEVIN N. DALEY

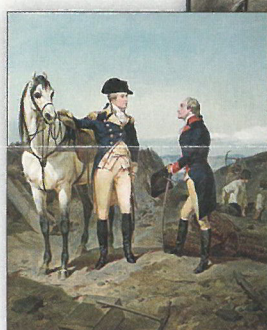
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Alexander Hamilton Soldier, Founder, and Philosopher

Revolutionary War Days

By age 21, Alexander Hamilton identified himself with the revolutionary cause. He organized an artillery unit that defended New York City and fought in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. George Washington noticed Hamilton's daring and intelligence, and appointed him as a personal aide.

Hamilton's new job required him to be writer, diplomat, and advisor to Washington. Even so, Hamilton ached to return to battle. Eventually, Washington appointed him colonel of an infantry brigade. Hamilton led a major attack in the battle of Yorktown in 1781.



SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC MUSEUM & LIBRARY / ALONZO CHAPPEL



Hamilton met George Washington in 1776 (left) and soon became his aide de camp. He was back in battle at Yorktown (above), where he led a daring, successful attack.

Bold Ideas for New Times

As a lawyer after the war, Hamilton defended New York citizens who had been loyal to Britain. He argued the new treaties and laws protected all citizens, and that loyalists would help rebuild the city. He also led the New York Manumission Society, which protected and educated free and enslaved African Americans.

At the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Hamilton argued for a

strong central government. With James Madison and John Jay, he wrote essays explaining the new Constitution and urging citizens to vote for its ratification. Politicians and judges still consult "The Federalist Papers" about the meaning of the US Constitution.

In the New Government

As first Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton recommended the federal government pay off states' debts, tax imported goods, establish a national bank, and promote manufacturing. His ideas worried Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, who believed the federal government did not have such powers. But Hamilton argued the Constitution supported flexible "implied powers." Congress and the Supreme Court agreed. By the end of Hamilton's term, the country had excellent credit and a strong economy.

A Controversial Citizen

Hamilton resumed his law practice in 1795 after leaving federal service. His clients included free and enslaved African Americans whom he helped for no pay. He also defended a newspaper editor sued for slander by Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton argued journalists had the same rights as citizens to freedom of speech. His victory strengthened United States citizens' First Amendment rights.

Hamilton often criticized President Jefferson's government and his vice president, Aaron Burr. His harsh words about Burr led to the duel that ended Hamilton's life.

Alexander Hamilton's short and controversial life left the United States poised to become a powerful nation, something he dreamed of but did not see.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, FAR LEFT; NPS / MARK MUSE, LEFT; NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY / MC HYDE, BACKGROUND



James Earl Fraser's statue of Hamilton (right), is at the Treasury Building in Washington, DC. Hamilton worked on New York's Wall Street (background).

Planning Your Visit

Hamilton Grange is on West 141st Street between Convent and St. Nicholas avenues—its third location. In 1889, the city began building new streets across the estate. A church bought The Grange and moved it to safety two blocks away. In 2008, the National Park Service moved it to its current location, still on the original estate.

Hamilton Grange is open year-round, 9 am to 5 pm Wednesday through Sunday except Thanksgiving and December 25. Exhibits and a film highlight Hamilton's major achievements. Guided tours are first-come first-served and limited to 15 visitors. Enjoy quiet activities on the grounds.

We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. Call, or visit our website.

More Information

Hamilton Grange National Memorial
414 West 141st Street
New York, NY 10031
646-548-2310
www.nps.gov/hagr

Hamilton Grange is near bus routes and subway stations; see map at right. Visit www.mta.info for routes and schedules.

All applicable federal, state, and city laws and regulations apply here.

Hamilton Grange National Memorial is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks, visit www.nps.gov.

